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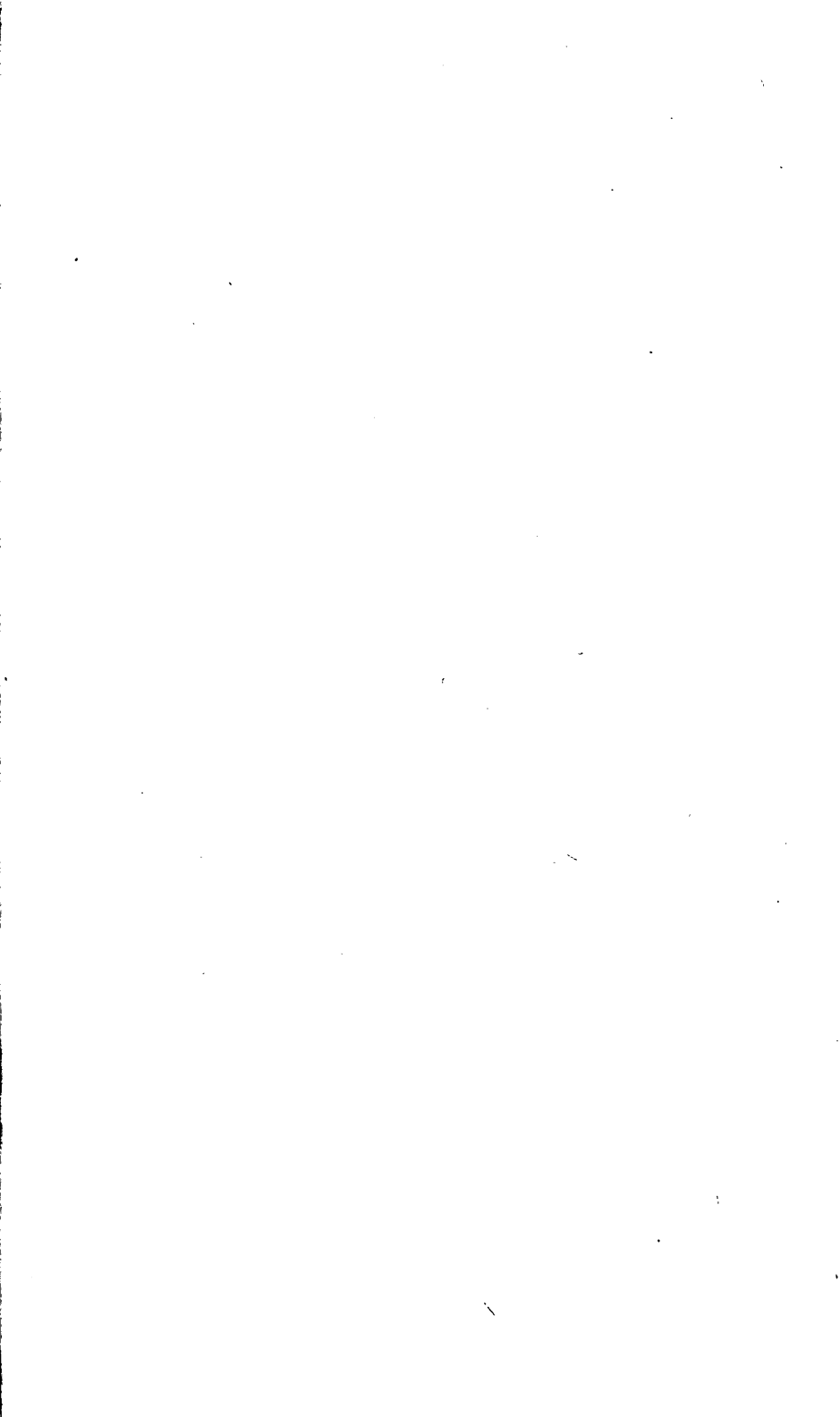
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S P E E C H

OF

THE MOST REVEREND HIS GRACE
THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN,

ON PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

RESPECTING

EDUCATION (IRELAND),

IN

THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

On TUESDAY, MARCH 19th, 1833.

Extracted from the MIRROR of PARLIAMENT.—Part CXCVI.

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HOUSE OF LORDS,

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 1833.

THE ARCHBISHOP of DUBLIN.—My Lords, I present myself to your notice, under circumstances which would be painful and embarrassing even to an individual who is not, like myself, a perfect stranger to you until this evening; because I am, as it were, placed upon my trial. I am, I say, placed upon my trial, not only on account of my connexion with a system of education which the Noble Earl calls a “bantling of Romanism”—a “nefarious system”—but also upon the ground that I have, as a member of the Board, been guilty of something like malversation and bribery in the distribution of the public funds. I am not accustomed to address such an assembly as that in which I am now speaking, and, therefore, your Lordships should remember that I cannot be expected to do such justice to any cause as a more practised debater; but I hope to receive indulgence at your Lordships’ hands. I have not long resided in Ireland; and when I visited it fourteen years ago, I remained but for a short time in that country; but the state of Ireland has, for a considerable period, occupied my attention. I have always looked upon Ireland as a part of my own country, and a part deserving a more anxious care and attention, on account of its distracted and unhappy condition; and I have often wondered that Englishmen, generally, do not take the same view of the subject. When I was requested by Ministers to become a member of the Board of Education, I was not altogether taken by surprise; for the defective means of education in Ireland was a subject which I had frequently turned over in my mind. After much consideration and extensive inquiry, I consented to become a member of the Board, from a deliberate conviction that the plan proposed by the Government was more likely to prove serviceable to the country, than any other that could be adopted. I may have been mistaken in my decision. I have been blamed for rashness in not submitting, implicitly, to the guidance of those whose expe-

rience was greater than mine. But it was absolutely impossible to be so guided. Those who have had the longest experience differed widely from each other, not only in their opinions, but in their statement of facts.

Some persons, of great experience, have alleged that the Kildare-street schools were making great progress, and were capable of furnishing everything that was wanted; others, on the contrary, assured me that they were very much checked by the new Reformation Society, which tended to obstruct the progress hitherto made. Some experienced and very respectable persons alleged that the repeal of the penal laws had been beneficial; while others on the contrary, assured me that it was a grievous error. Thus, I was reduced to the necessity of collecting the best facts I could, and of forming my own deductions from them; and, as the result of them, I consented to become one of the Commissioners, but certainly not with a view to emolument, or to any credit, ease, or comfort of my own; for I well foresaw that the office would be one of great delicacy, and would expose me to much suspicion, and, probably, to hostile opposition; but I did not expect the extent to which that opposition has been carried, because I knew there were many schools in Ireland, acting upon a similar plan, which were patronised (or, at least, not at all objected to) by the very persons who are the loudest in their opposition to this. It has been repeated, in various ways, in a manner as if it were intended to take away whatever credit may be due to my testimony, that I supported this, and was ready to support any other measure, which his Majesty's Ministers might suggest—as being a devoted partisan, pledged to co-operate in any plan—as being a person attached to the present Administration. It may be of little consequence whether such a person as myself is attached to any party or not; but, if I am worth mentioning at all, I am worth mentioning with truth. I do not intend to impute wilful falsehood to any individuals who may have propagated such a report; and who, perhaps, may never have met with or heard of a man who was not connected with a political party; still they are not justified in putting forth conjecture as matter of fact. All who know my life, know that I have always refused to ally myself to any party, either ecclesiastical or political. I consider each question proposed, on its own intrinsic merits, without reference to the quarter from which it proceeds; and I was ready to support this measure of the present Ministers, as I would any measure of any Ministry, if I found, in my unbiassed judgment, it was likely to be beneficial to the country. It may be said, indeed, that there is no moral turpitude in being attached to a political party. That is the very

reason why I put in this disclaimer of being a partisan at all. As to personal attacks, I would disdain to reply to them. Any such attacks I shall answer, as I always have answered, not by words, but by my conduct. I hold, my Lords, that a character which will not defend itself, is little worth defending. But it is precisely because a man may, without blame, within certain limits be connected with a certain political party, that I disclaim being attached to any. Being, as I am, an independent man, I feel myself entitled to be considered one. I protest against having anything I say or do, which is favourable to any measure brought forward by his Majesty's Ministers, interpreted as the act of a devoted partisan; or that anything which I do or say in opposition to their measures, should be considered as reluctant and extorted evidence against them; in short, that everything on the one side should be at a premium, and, on the other side, at a discount. I am not a party man. I only wish your Lordships to interpret all my language and conduct with the same candour and sincerity with which I at this moment speak.

I consider myself bound to state thus much, both in justice to myself, and in justice to his Majesty's Ministers. But, my Lords, I will now speak as to the grants of the Government money by the Commissioners. I have already stated, that I did not find that the system proposed to be adopted as the Government plan of education, was by any means essentially at variance with that pursued at several other schools which had had none of this clamour raised against them. In the course of many private conversations, individuals had brought forward objections, some of which I must acknowledge were sound and valid. There are objections, undoubtedly, against the education of Roman Catholics and Protestants together; there are objections, and in my mind,—stronger,—to their education being conducted separately; and there are also objections, which I consider as the strongest of all, against not educating them at all. We have a choice of these three evils, and I think the least evil has been chosen. I find an example before me; among other schools, I take that of the Mendicity Institution in Dublin. There both Roman Catholic and Protestant children receive their education in common, in those points, which do not interfere with the peculiar tenets of either: one day, or part of a day, in each week being allotted for the children to receive religious instruction from their respective pastors. I lament that there should be this difference in the religious education of the children, which I fear, in many cases, leads to much hostility between them. But the evil must be met. If the

stream when stopped in one channel is seen flowing in another, it must be met by other means. The system pursued at the Mendicity Institution was the very type of the one followed in the Government scheme; and, consequently, as that institution was rather low in its funds, it was thought, by some connected with the school, that application should be made to the Government for assistance. A sort of inquiry was instituted, when it was finally determined not to make the application, because a considerable number of the subscribers declared that, if the Society had anything to do with that "nefarious system," they would withdraw their subscriptions. Yet it appeared that they were going on exactly the same system, in every particular, with that of the Education Board.

I will not weary your Lordships by going through all the objections which have been raised against the system itself, and which have been long since fully discussed. I will not go the length of saying,—considering your Lordships as pledged to the conviction,—that the system is good; but neither ought its opponents to say that it never can possibly succeed; because that point remains yet to be decided. It was brought before your Lordships in a former Session, when it was decided that the system should be tried. I do not imagine that Noble Lords, who gave their vote on that occasion, meant to pledge themselves to the certainty of its success, or that they were determined to stand by it whether it should prove successful or a failure, but they have decided that the system should be tried, and I am of opinion that it deserves a fair trial. If your Lordships do not mean to accuse yourselves of folly in coming to that decision, I ask you, in common justice—give it a sufficiently long trial. You have been told that the working of the Kildare-street Society was going on well, but had not been sufficiently tried; and that it was premature to stop it. I do not mean to say that it has had a sufficient trial; but it has, for a great many years, had inspectors of its own, a model-school for training masters and mistresses, and numerous books have been either compiled or composed for the especial use of the Society. It had not only trained masters and mistresses, but most of those who now superintended the schools as such, were children educated by the Society.

I need not explain to your Lordships that a model-school is of the utmost importance in any system of public education. It is a school under the immediate inspection of the chief patrons and governors of the system where the masters and mistresses are trained, and receive that kind of education which is thought the best. Now, the model-school of the Board of Education in Merion-street, for boys, was

opened yesterday,—the girls' model-school will not be opened till after Easter; and yet we are told that this system has had a fair trial! Till we can send out masters and mistresses properly trained, it cannot be contended that the trial has even fairly commenced. It is ridiculous to call for returns of accounts, and to speak of the result of the experiment in this stage of the business, when this essential part of the establishment only commenced yesterday, and when the whole scheme has not been in any degree of operation for one year. One is reminded by this of the conduct of the child, who, having sown flower seeds in the garden, digs them up every day to see if they are growing. One may laugh at a child for doing so, but if an adult were to do the same thing, it might be suspected that he did not mean them to grow at all. If the system be to be tried at all, it should have a sufficiently long trial;—in the next place it should have a fair trial;—and in the last place (which is no insignificant matter), we should not be perpetually interrupted. The business of our secretary and other officers should not be put aside for the sake of making out returns. Much time is lost by such requisitions. The Board consists entirely of persons whose other occupations alone would be sufficient to occupy them, if possessed of double their present strength. The effect of any interruption upon our progress may therefore be well conceived. There are several hundred applications which we have not yet had time to consider, and this not from any remissness on our parts; and I pledge myself on the whole, that we have been not only laboriously diligent, but most scrupulously economical in our expenditure; but it cannot be expected that I should carry in my memory all the forty-nine cases which the Noble Earl has laid before you. I beg, however, the Noble Lord to remember, that his is an *ex parte* statement, and that if I had an opportunity to inquire into those cases, I have no doubt considerable modifications would be introduced into it.

In all cases where applications have been made for the aid or for the establishment of schools, we have instituted inquiries, in order to ascertain the character of the persons making such applications, and the description of the scholars. I cannot now bring forward any of the correspondence, but I can assure your Lordships, that we have acted with the most scrupulous care with respect to the character of the schools to which grants have been made, as well as in the allocation of them. In one case that has been brought forward—that of the Mendicity Institution,—the salary proposed was, altogether, 100*l.*; but, up to this day, no grant has been made to it. Ordinarily, we have

granted salaries of no more than 10*l.* and 15*l.* a-year, which struck me as being very low. But I have to entreat your Lordships to remember, that all these cases are such as it is impossible for me now to explain. It would take me hours to search for all the documents relating to one half of them. But, after all, it appears that there are forty-nine cases in which grants have been alleged to have been improperly, excessively, or ill appropriated. Now, my Lords, there are 497 schools in existence, to which grants have been made; so that the cases of objection are not quite one in ten. These, my Lords, have been collected, as you have been told, with care and pains; and I trust with the same care and pains they may be very satisfactorily explained. But, however, the chief complaint I have to make of the statement of the Noble Earl is, that it is not only not an uncorrupted, but it is not a fair statement; because, one of the allegations of the Noble Earl is, that Protestant clergymen are not concerned in the management of these schools,—that the schools are exclusively Roman Catholics, all the Protestant children being withdrawn. But, my Lords, can this be matter of astonishment, when those Protestants who are favourable to these schools live in the midst of a system of intimidation and persecution, directed against all who venture to come forward in their support? There is no calumny that has not been thrown out against the most honourable persons connected with the schools—no delusion which has not been propagated among the people—no terms so gross which have not been applied in condemnation of the system. Your Lordships have heard some pretty strong language this evening; but far beyond what you have heard used by the Noble Earl, is the ordinary language applied to those who venture to favour these schools. Every epithet which the language can furnish has been put in requisition. We have been accused—and all persons who have sent their children to the schools have been accused—of being anti-Protestants, anti-Christians, atheists, traitors, apostates—in short, the language has been exhausted of its terms of opprobrium by our accusers. So great has been the intimidation, that individuals dread having their names brought forward in any discussion in this House, because they apprehend their characters will suffer a moral assassination. One person who has suffered by this system of intimidation has said that while property is destroyed in the south, character is destroyed in the north; and that even the burnings and murders in the south, are not a more cruel persecution than that which is undergone in the north. He speaks of a presbyterian congregation being set against their pastor, and

having been withdrawn from him, and incited to insult him in the streets with the most reproachful epithets; and all because he ventured to approve the Government plan of education. Your Lordships can bear witness that we have been accused of forcing the system upon the Irish people. Many of our opponents have themselves said that the plan may not be objectionable in itself, but that it ought not to be forced on the people. My Lords, it is utterly untrue; no force has been used by us, either direct or indirect, or by our assistance or connivance. All our force has been this,—"if you choose to establish schools under such and such regulations, here is money for you; but [don't take it if you are not inclined." But, my Lords, the whole country has been told, and it is believed in England, and has given rise to those petitions of which your Lordships have heard so much,—that the Protestants have been deprived of the Bible. We certainly do not compel,—and I, for one, would never wish to compel,—any one to read the Bible. I hold that it would partake of the spirit of persecution to do so; that it is contrary to the character of Protestantism; at all events that the spirit of Christianity is quite the other way; but though we do not make the reading of the scriptures compulsory, we make it imperative on all the schools that a certain portion of time should be set apart for religious instruction, namely—some one day, besides Sunday, in each week. Besides which, the patrons of the school may set apart a portion of time in each day for religious purposes, only allowing any of the scholars, who may experience any scruples on such occasions, to withdraw themselves.

If the Protestant clergyman—whether he approves of the system or not—pleases, he may appoint a time for the scholars to come to him, or to some one appointed by him, and learn the Church catechism; and an hour, each day, may be further appointed for both Protestant and Roman Catholic children to read portions of the Scriptures. Thus, each child going to school, and reading the Bible for one hour a-day, for five days in the week, and receiving religious instruction the whole of one or two other days, is yet said to be deprived of the Word of God. How many of your Lordships' own children, or how many of yourselves devote so much time to religious instruction? I only wish that such instruction as that given and inculcated at these schools were more general than it is; people would then know more of the Bible, and I hope of the spirit of it, than they now do. But, my Lords, many of the clergy declare, in letters to us, that they will not give any religious instruction whatever to the children frequenting these schools, or even go near them,

or admit them. If they conceive themselves justified in their conduct—be it so. Their own consciences must guide their actions. But surely they must not come forward, and, availing themselves of their own wrong, say that their flocks are deprived, or attempted to be deprived, of Protestant instruction, when they are themselves depriving them of it. If the apostles had been so scrupulous, and had never gone into the synagogue of unbelieving Jews,—or if the great apostle had felt it a pollution to stand on the hill dedicated to the god Mars to preach to the Athenians,—I do believe that none of us would ever have heard of the gospel. I do not at all blame any person, if he really thinks that, being a Protestant clergyman, he cannot, with a safe conscience, encourage the Government system of education, although I must consider him to be in error, for abstaining from doing so; but surely he should not, in that case, come forward and condemn the system as being exclusively Roman Catholic! Suppose I were to send round to the parishioners of certain parishes, whose ministers differed from me in opinion, and warn them that their pastors were bad men, who preached unsound doctrines, and that they ought to keep away from them; and rather frequent another church or meeting-house, or none at all: this would be thought rather a strong measure. But if, after their parishioners had taken my advice, I should turn round upon the pastors and upbraid them for having their churches deserted, and their company shunned; what words would be deemed sufficient to characterize the oppressive tyranny of such conduct? Pharaoh was called an oppressor when he beat and reproached the Israelites for not delivering the tale of bricks after he had deprived them of the requisite materials; but he did not go so far as to promulgate an edict, exhorting his subjects to prevent them from going into the fields to gather straw where they could find it, and then turn and reproach them for not bringing their tale of bricks. Whether the system was bad or good, it ought not to be frustrated by unfair means; but should be put to a reasonable test before judgment is pronounced upon it. The question, as to its being allowable to instruct members of different persuasions in the same school, your Lordships will decide; but I have looked over the rules of the Benevolent Society of St. Patrick,—an institution which has been established in London for fifty years; and I there find, that the children of each persuasion—whether Protestant, Catholic, or Dissenter—are even required to be instructed by clergymen of their own faith.

That the teachers under this charity be desired to see that the children attend to their religious duties (according to their pa-

rents' wishes); the Protestant children to Protestant worship; the Catholic to Catholic worship; and all others to their respective modes of communion—the principles and protection of this Institution extending, without prejudice or distinction, to all forms of faith; but that no religious controversy, or any tendencies to proselytism, be ever allowed in the schools;—the teachers being hereby most strictly enjoined to cultivate, in all their pupils, the utmost good-will to each other, and the entire extinction of all religious bigotry.

Our system is founded upon very much the same principle, except that St. Patrick's Society goes a step further; for it enjoins the teachers to see that the children devote themselves to their religious duties according to the several persuasions of their parents. But with us it was objected to having a registry of the children going to different places of worship, and we withdrew it. An address of the Irish Bench of Bishops, and of the dean and chapter of St. Patrick, and of the clergy of the diocese of Dublin were presented to the Board before that alteration was made, and they mainly insisted upon that as a circumstance which dwelt upon their consciences. That difficulty was removed. They also objected that from their knowledge of the Roman Catholics they were quite convinced they would never tolerate any extracts from the Scriptures which would not be most improperly garbled. Now as to a mutilation of the Scriptures, I have always understood that to be—the publication of what professed to be a book, which it is not; or professed to be selections, which are not faithfully made; and not such as Mrs. Trimmer's *Selections*, which have been commonly used in all schools both in England and Ireland from time immemorial. I will not trouble your Lordships by noticing all the accusations which have been brought against the Board of Education. In fact the greater part of them I have never seen, but have been told that they appear in the Dublin newspapers, most of which I do not read. Those which have come under my eyes I believe average about four or five libels against me, or some other of the Commissioners, every week. A system of complete terroism is instituted against all persons who are disposed to support the new plan of education, in order to obstruct the efforts of the Commissioners. I have seen a letter written by a prelate in Ireland to a clergyman within his diocese, commanding him, on his canonical obedience, not to support these schools. With respect to the falsehoods which are propagated, I will only mention one or two specimens which are of a piece with what are occurring every day. One is of a nature similar to some of the accusations brought forward this evening relative to applications having been made to, and grants obtained from, the Board by fraud and delusion. No doubt

such things have been done; for, unfortunately, fraud and delusion are not peculiar to one part of Ireland, or to one sect or party. All I can say is, we have never countenanced such conduct, but have been most careful to guard against it. But one of the selected cases brought forward against us is this:—a speaker, it seems, at some public meeting in Dublin, said that a clergyman of an imbecile mind was carried away to some place privately by the Commissioners, or persons employed by them, and there entrapped into the signing of a paper indicating his approbation of the system, and his wish that it should be introduced into his parish: that after being informed by his friends what a wicked act he had done, he sent to retract his signature, but that no notice was taken of his letter.

I trust, my Lords, it is not necessary for me to say, that nothing of the kind ever happened. It is not possible, that any one who knows me can, for a moment, believe that I could have anything to do with such a scheme as that of kidnapping a clergyman for that or any other purpose. But it has been sufficiently refuted by the circumstance of a public contradiction and defiance put forth by the commissioners to the authors of the calamity, to bring forward their evidence—a defiance which they have not dared to answer. In consequence of such calumnious falsehoods, a resolution was entered on the books, that in the case of any future slanders of this kind, a prosecution would be instituted. I recollect, that in several instances retractions of signatures to applications for grants have been made—in all such cases we have acted as if no such signatures had ever existed;—but when there remained a sufficient number of other signatures to justify the grants, we have not deemed it our duty to withhold them. Whether the persons so signing and afterwards retracting, were imbecile in mind, I know not;—they may be said to have been of imbecile mind, and very rash to sign what they did not understand. It has been several times stated to us, in letters retracting signatures, that the writers understood that the system was for the purpose of excluding Protestants from receiving a religious education, and for preventing the Bible from being read. If any delusion existed in these cases, your Lordships may be assured in was not on our part. But I recollect only two cases of clergymen who have so retracted. One was a gentleman, who sent in his application, and afterwards his daughter-in-law sent to retract it. She was informed, that as the clergyman had signed the application, he must himself withdraw it. A month or two elapsed, and he then retracted, and his name was withdrawn.

Another case was that of two Protestant clergymen—a rector and his curate. It happened, in that instance, that the curate asked the rector in my presence, whether he would like to have assistance from the Board, to the school in the parish; the rector answered, “O, yes, certainly.” An application was soon after sent in, signed by the Roman Catholic priest of the parish, several of the parishioners, and the curate, the latter expressly declaring that he did so with the approbation of the rector. Afterwards the rector changed his mind, and sent in his retraction; but the curate had not changed his mind; there is no canonical rule to oblige him to do so because his rector did. His name remains to the application, and as the Protestant clergyman, having the entire cure of the parish, it is sufficient to sustain the continuance of the grant. But, my Lords, permit me again to advert to the subject of scriptural extracts. It is said that it is impossible that extracts from the Scriptures can be used in a school with the approbation of Roman Catholics, without mutilation. I will not admit that extracts are necessarily mutilations: that is to say, when they are published as parts, and not as the whole of the Scriptures. If so, then every one of the apostolical epistles is a mutilation, because they came out separately, and not the whole together; if so, then has the evil existed almost universally for a long period of time, for there are but few schools which have not used Mrs. Trimmer’s *Selections*. The Board of Education first put forth the whole of the Book of Genesis, with the exception of those parts which parents do not object to keep out of the hands of children; but those are not doctrinal parts. Your Lordships have been told that the Bible forms a common ground; or basis, for the education of Protestants and Catholics, and that the children ought to read the whole of it. But, in fact, there is no such common standard. It is very possible for Roman Catholic teachers and Protestants to select particular passages which children of both creeds may indifferently be allowed to read; but it is very far from being true that the whole of the Bible is one common standard for both churches. Our authorized version is not admitted to be any authority, acknowledged by the Roman Catholics; even the Douay version is not an authorized version with them, although the translation is made from the Vulgate, which is their authorized version. The differences are not essential in most instances, but in some few they are. Besides which we should consider that the Apocrypha is part of the Roman Catholic Bible, but no part of the Protestant Bible; therefore there is no common ground for the two religions to stand upon. Consequently, when the Kildare Street School was founded,

that evil was felt, and the children were allowed to use either the authorized version or the Douay version. But selections, it is assumed, will never be permitted to be used by Roman Catholics, except they be garbled. It is rather harsh and uncharitable to assume that garbled extracts, or mutilated selections, would receive the sanction of the three Protestant clergymen who are resident members of the Board. There is an English, an Irish, and a Scotch Protestant clergyman on the commission—Dr. Sadleir, who was educated at Trinity College, Dublin; myself, educated at Oxford; and the Reverend Mr. Carlile, a Presbyterian minister, and belonging to the Synod of Ulster. It is not likely that we should agree to any mutilated extracts, in order to favour the errors of the Romish faith. However, when such a case takes place, then will be the time to come forward and accuse us; but do not let us be prejudged. Do not condemn us without a hearing or without a trial. But of the many accusations made against the Board, one or two I will mention by way of specimen. One is, respecting a supposed note in the first number of the selections which is considered to sanction the worshipping of the Virgin Mary, of whom, however, it so happens that no mention whatever is made throughout. But a heavier charge is brought against the second number of *The Scriptural Lessons*, taken from the New Testament, which is not yet published, though the whole is now completed, with the exception of half of one sheet. This number contains the whole of the Gospel of St. Luke—that “mutilated” portion of the Scripture, the entire Gospel of St. Luke! It was stated at a public meeting, several months ago, that a hot dispute took place at the Board with regard to the two different versions of the 3d chapter of St. Luke, the one having “repentance,” and the other “penance,” which involves some points in controversy between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. It seems, however, that we compromised the difference, and, instead of using the words “repentance,” or “penance,” we agreed that both should be thrown out, and all mention of repentance omitted. Complaints were immediately raised at this, and not more strong than just, as it seemed to be throwing in the shade the Christian duty of repentance. This statement was repeatedly mentioned in private conversation, it was again and again reported in the newspapers, and a loud clamour was raised against the Board for having, by this omission of repentance, invalidated the whole Gospel. It is indeed a very serious accusation; there is, however, one circumstance relating to it which has been unnoticed, but which, perhaps, is of little importance to those who first

propagated it, but which your Lordships will probably regard as the greatest,—and that is, that there is not one word of truth in it from beginning to end, but that the whole is a pure fabrication. I pledge my honour that there never was the slightest dispute at the Board as to repentance or penance. There stands the passage and has always stood, exactly as in the authorised version—"repentance." There was a note added to explain, for the satisfaction, I suppose, of the Roman Catholics, that, as the word "penance" might be liable to misconstruction, or might be offensive to Protestants, while "repentance" was not likely to give offence to any party, it was therefore preferred. After this explanation, I hope those who propagated that scandalous report will deeply and publicly testify their repentance of it. I have mentioned this circumstance as a specimen, and I pledge myself it is no more than a specimen, of the reports which were spread, not only over Ireland, but over England also. These are the engines by which the efforts of the Commissioners are assailed, and I appeal to your Lordships whether this is giving a fair trial to the Government scheme, or whether any man is acting wisely even for the attainment of his own object, in allowing it to be said that the system is assailed by every kind of misrepresentation and falsehood, and I may add, by violence and intemperance of language, which does not appear to me to savour of the spirit of Christianity. We have been assailed in a manner which, I am sure, if I had retaliated by so hunting down the characters of clergymen, they would have complained of, very grievously and very justly. And there is no mutilation of Scripture I more deprecate than that of leaving out in our practice the great and fundamental precept of the Christian religion—"Do as you would be done by." Meetings have been called at Exeter Hall in this metropolis, in Bath, and in various places throughout the kingdom, to oppose this system of education; and from all those meetings persons have been systematically excluded who did not agree in the object for which they were called—of opposition to the system. Persons who were present were not suffered to be heard unless they were prepared to oppose the Government measure. In this manner, petitions may be got up against anything.

By representing to the people of England that the people of Ireland are about to be delivered up to the influence and dictation of the Roman Catholic priests, whether they wish it or not,—a delusion has been wrought upon their minds which prevents them from judging from any correct knowledge of this question. Is it, I will not say fair,—but is it wise to make use of these misrepresentations? If the system

be in itself faulty, speak of it as it is ; but let not the people be deluded. But we shall see a far different feeling towards it when the public shall have been left to their own unbiassed judgment. When Æolus shall have brought his winds back into his cave, we shall have the sea calm again. Let there be no delusion, no persecution, no intimidation on either side. I pledge myself, and I speak on behalf of my Colleagues, that we will do nothing of that kind in favour of the system. Let the opponents of the system do as much ; let them allow it a fair trial ; and a fair trial it will not have till it has been tried for at least as many months, as the Kildare-street Society has been, years.

I have taken upon myself to state many things upon my own authority which I could well support by testimony, but that I dare not ; lest, by mentioning names I should sacrifice the peace, comfort, and—I will not say personal safety—but safety of credit and character of many respectable individuals. I have, however, no hesitation in saying, that there are many clergymen of the Protestant Establishment, and of the Presbyterian persuasion, who do approve of this system ; but who do not support it, because, some of their neighbours have raised so violent a clamour against it, that until their outcry be put down they cannot venture to expose themselves to the censure and obloquy which they would have to undergo. Many clergymen have told me so, whose names of course I cannot reveal. I have known some clergymen who have refused to sign applications for grants on the ground that the Bishops of their dioceses had signed the protest against the establishment of the Board ; and that though they themselves approved of the system, yet they did not think it would be decorous to come forward and have their names in opposition to their diocesans. Others, as I have already said, have declared they will have nothing to do with these schools. I wish every man to enjoy, untrammelled, his own opinion, and to be at liberty to speak and act according to his own judgment and conscience, without being exposed to any species of agitation. I say agitation, because there is, at this moment, an agitation going on in Ireland, not only of a political kind, but of a religious description, by which everything most harsh and severe is practised against the friends of the Government system,—and which is setting not only Protestants against Roman Catholics, but Protestants themselves against one another,—by holding up brethren to each other as apostates, infidels, traitors, and everything that is wicked. This system of education is said to have produced, in the same manner that the Gospel itself is said to have produced, the most disastrous effects, and to have set the father against

the son, and the son against the father. But it is not by the spirit and principle of the Christian religion that these things are done, but by the bad passions and ignorant prejudices of men. I am convinced that the system will be better understood, and, in consequence, more approved of day by day, provided it be suffered to have a fair trial ; but if a fair trial be denied it, I appeal to your Lordships, whether it is right to reproach the Commissioners and his Majesty's Ministers with the failure of a system, the full development of which is prevented by the conduct of its impugnors ?

In conclusion, I beg it to be understood that I am not deprecating any of the obloquy and opposition which the system has met with on my own account,—and I hope I may say the same on behalf of my brother Commissioners ;—but I intercede for Ireland ; I deprecate this agitation for the sake of the people of that distracted country, for whose benefit I would readily undergo, if possible, even more obloquy and abuse than what I have been already exposed to. Yes,—it is for the sake of that ill-fated country that I deprecate every species of agitation, whether on the part of Protestant or Roman Catholic. It is for the sake of Ireland, that I beseech your Lordships not to take any step which may tend to keep up this agitation. Let the system, my Lords, have a fair and uninterrupted trial, and then let your Lordships and the country, with a calm and Christian temper, decide upon its merits. For myself, I repeat that, so dear to me are the peace, and the welfare, and prosperity of that country, that I am ready to sacrifice everything,—even life itself,—for the improvement, the restoration, and moral regeneration of Ireland.

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